

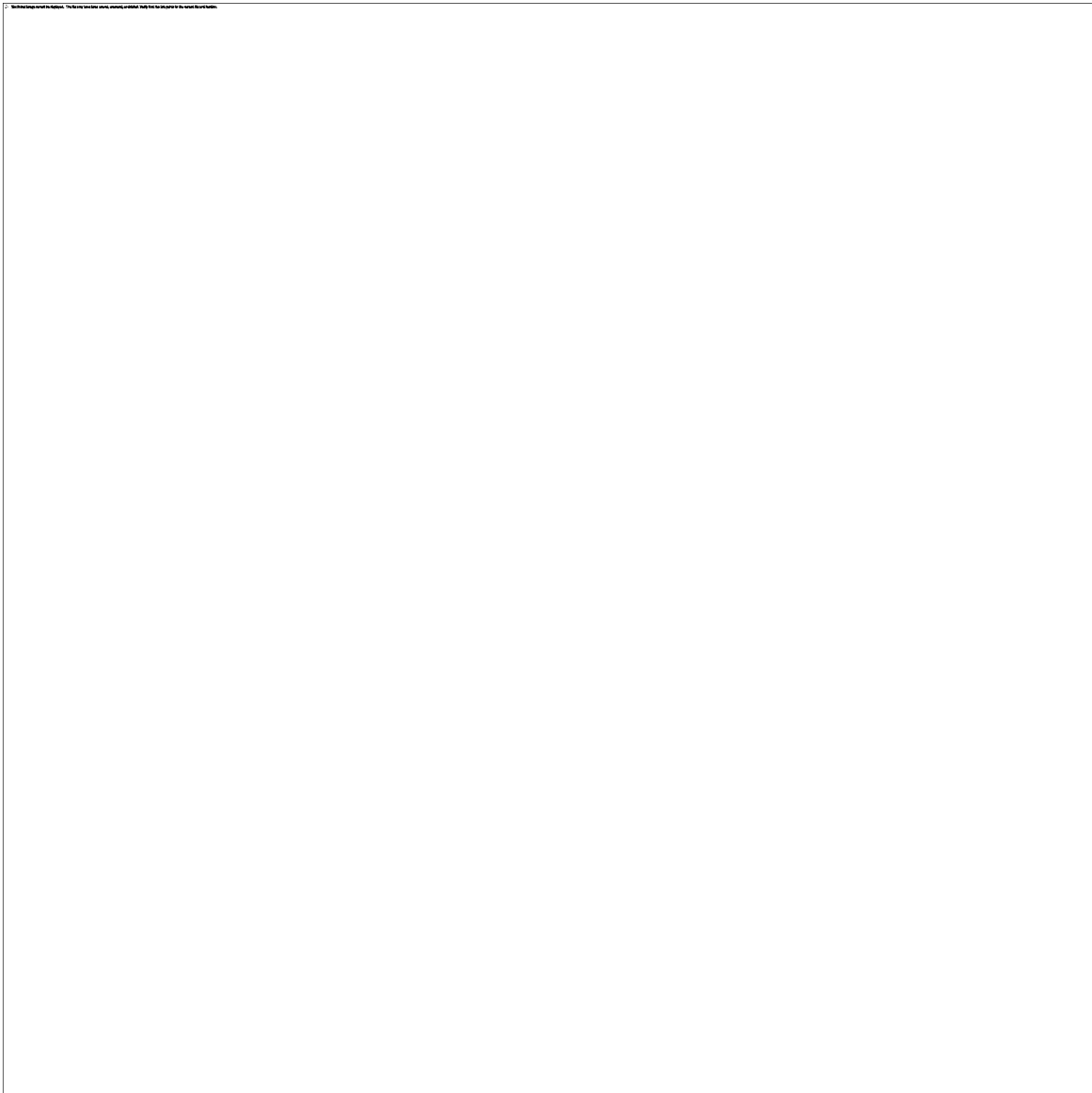
Message

---

**From:** Your Team at Save the Sound [info@savethesound.org]  
**Sent:** 1/30/2023 8:57:15 PM  
**To:** Williamson, Anahita [Williamson.Anahita@epa.gov]  
**Subject:** Weekly Update: Environmental Justice on the Rise



*Welcome to your weekly environmental newsletter! We aim to bring you environmental stories that are relevant to YOU every week, along with action opportunities, upcoming events, and beautiful photos from around the region. Want to keep everything you see here going? Consider a gift to Save the Sound.*



## Strengthening Environmental Justice Protections in Connecticut and New York

Environmental justice is on the rise around the region!

In the last days of 2022, New York Governor Kathy Hochul signed landmark legislation that strengthens protections for communities that are already bearing disproportionate pollution burdens. S.8830/A.2103D, which Save the Sound and partners advocated for last year, ensures cumulative impacts are taken into consideration in the State's environmental permitting processes when potentially polluting facilities seek permits in disadvantaged communities. Now we're working toward the same goal in Connecticut.

On Jan. 19, Save the Sound brought together other environmentalists, elected officials, and organizations representing labor, racial justice, faith, and health professionals in submitting [a letter to Governor Ned Lamont and the Connecticut](#)

General Assembly requesting legislative action on a stronger environmental justice (EJ) law for the State of Connecticut.

Section 22a-20a of Connecticut's General Statutes requires operators seeking a permit to build or expand an affecting facility located in a state-designated environmental justice community to file an Environmental Justice Public Participation Plan with, and receive approval from, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) prior to filing the permit application.

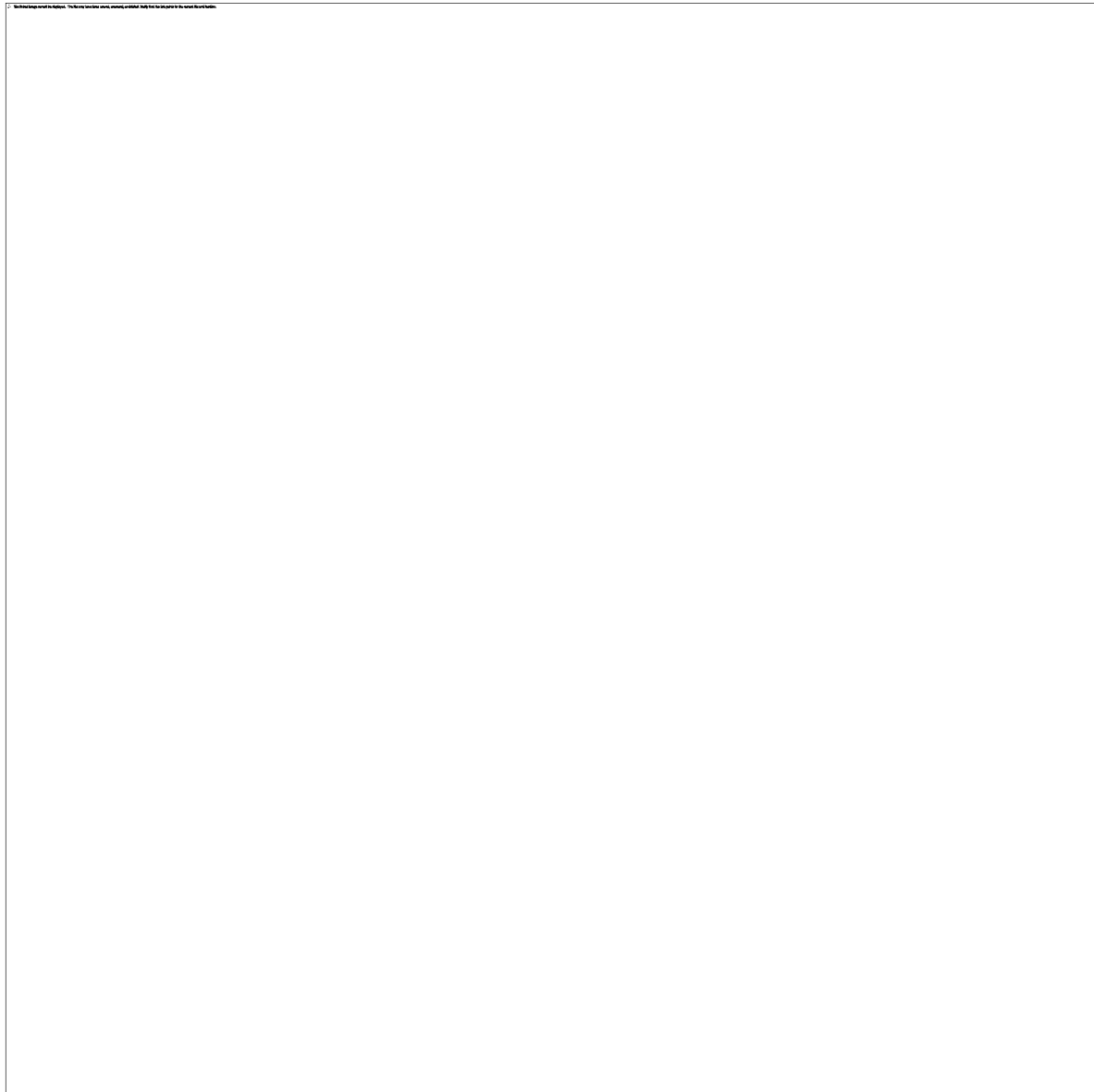
Though public participation requirements are in place, they are insufficient to protect public health because they do not consider the *cumulative* impact of existing and proposed new facilities. As a result, additional polluting facilities are routinely permitted in economically and environmentally distressed communities.

"For too long, low-income communities and communities of color have disproportionately suffered from the environmental and health hazards created by trash incinerators, power plants, and other polluting facilities. We're calling on Governor Lamont and the Connecticut General Assembly to act legislatively to change the permitting process that allows additional polluting sources in these communities," said Alex Rodriguez, environmental justice specialist at Save the Sound.

The signatories of the letter—40 organizations and over 100 individuals—are advocating for an update to Connecticut's environmental justice law, Public Act 20-6. We want the update to this rule to require DEEP and the Siting Council to say no to added polluting hazards in already distressed communities. [Read more about the effort in our press release.](#)

---

Merwin Meadows restoration will be in full swing this spring



To restore upstream passage for fish and other organisms in the Norwalk River watershed and to return the river to its natural, free-flowing condition, we are removing Dana Dam (aka Strong Pond Dam) this spring. This priority ecological restoration project at Merwin Meadows in Wilton, CT, is supported by US EPA, CT DEEP, US Fish & Wildlife Service, National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, Trout Unlimited, Town of Wilton, Norwalk River Watershed Association, New Canaan Community Foundation, Richardson Foundation, and many local advocates and donors. The first stage of the construction—removing posted trees for construction access and worker safety—starts in early March. This timeline is important to ensure that the habitat of endangered Northern Long-eared bats, which arrive in this area to roost in trees in April, are not disturbed. Trees being cut will be used for restoration purposes, and replanting of trees at this site will be a part of community engagement events in the future. We are excited to begin this multi-phase project to restore critical wildlife habitat!

---

## Understanding your state legislature—and how to lobby it effectively

The 2023 legislative sessions in NY and CT have begun, but what does that mean? We invited legislators and experienced advocates from each state to sit down with us and talk about how legislation gets written, revised, and voted into law, what a typical day in the Capitol is like, and, most importantly, how you can get involved! Each webinar includes presentations from Save the Sound staff—climate and energy attorney Charles Rothenberger, LI natural areas manager Louise Harrison, and environmental justice specialist Alex Rodriguez—walking you through the legislative process and concrete actions you can take. Check out the full webinars on our YouTube channel:

- ["Albany Behind-the-Scenes: How the NY Legislative Session Works,"](#) featuring guests Senator Shelley Mayer, Assemblyman Steve Otis, longtime Albany staffer Steve Liss
- ["Hartford Behind-the-Scenes: How the CT Legislative Session Works,"](#) featuring guests Representative Joseph Gresko, Representative Jonathan Steinberg, professional lobbyist Chris Smith

---

## Help our water quality team gear up for spring

Our water quality team doesn't need some groundhog's forecast to know that spring is coming fast. And they need help getting ready.

To gear up for the upcoming monitoring seasons, we are looking for two meticulous volunteers to help clean, calibrate, and organize the equipment used in our bacteria monitoring program and the Unified Water Study. Candidates must be available to come to our Larchmont office at least one day per week (3-6 hours between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.) over the next several weeks.

For more information, please email Ameera Khan, our environmental analyst: [akhan@savethesound.org](mailto:akhan@savethesound.org).

---

## Quick Links

- [The Shelter Island Reporter calls for saving Plum Island](#)
- Read more about our climate and environmental justice legislative priorities: ["Energy and environment legislative priorities include garbage, power and bears \(Oh my!\)," CT Mirror](#)
- Residents of Bridgeport, Stratford, and New Haven: Please help identify local needs by taking this [Survey on Climate Vulnerability and Environmental Injustice](#) from our partners at Seaside Sounds Club. Last day for survey submissions is Feb. 13.

- VIDEO: Soundkeeper Bill Lucey talks with Clean Water Ways host Lauren Post in [episode 2](#) of our partnership with the Town of Groton

---

### Upcoming Events

- Youth Eco Advocacy Corps monthly meeting, virtual, 1/31
- Hutchinson River Watershed Plan public meeting, virtual, 2/21

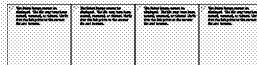
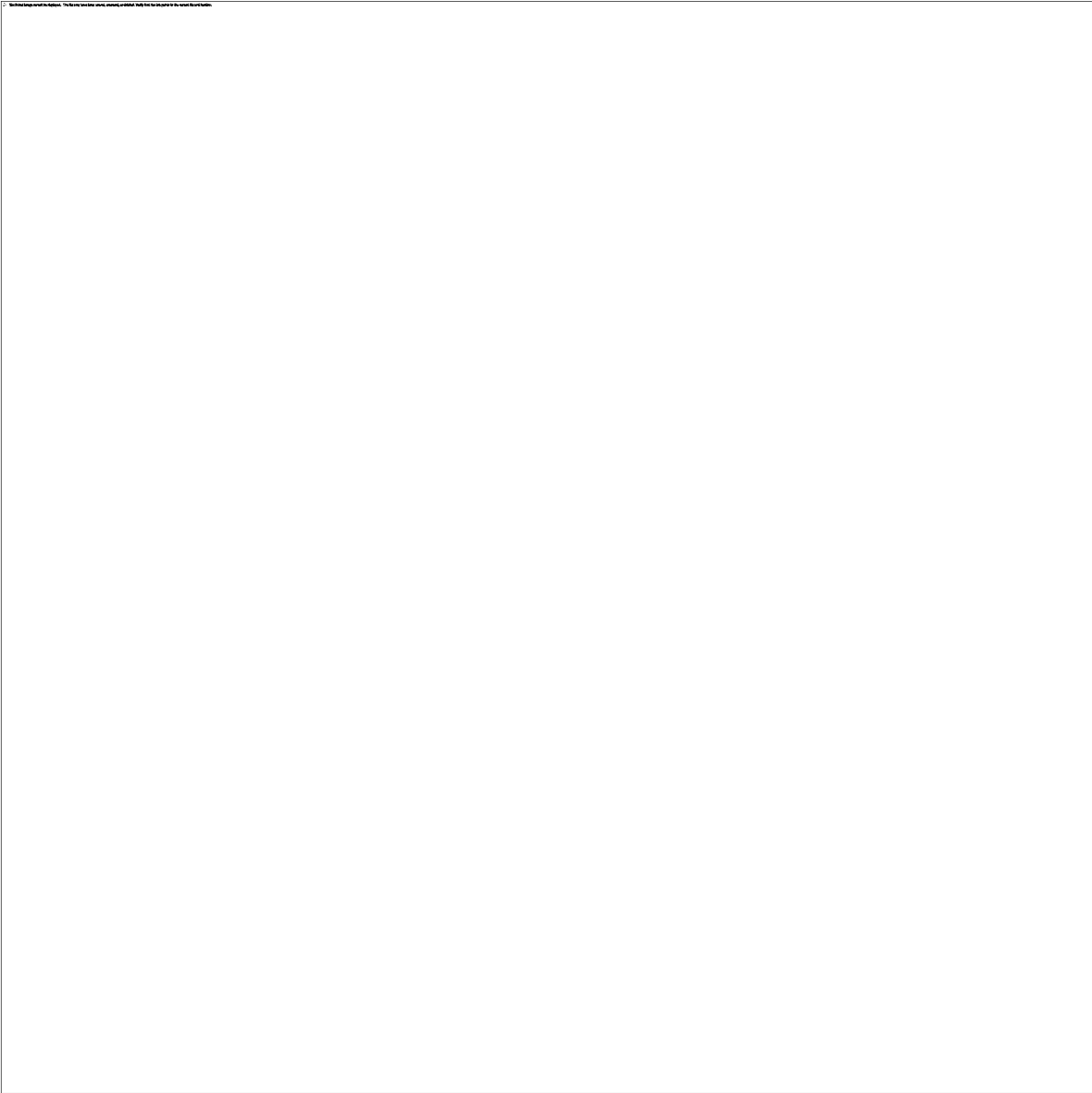
Find details on these, and all our events, on our [Stay Engaged](#) page.

---

### Photo of the Week

Our membership communications and events specialist Amanda James captured this pristine winter scene two weeks ago in Bigelow Hollow State Park in Union, CT.

Would you like your photo to be featured in an upcoming issue? Send it to us at [info@savethesound.org](mailto:info@savethesound.org)!



[Donate](#) | [Visit Our Website](#)

[View Message in Browser](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)

[Unsubscribe](#)

**Connecticut**

900 Chapel Street, Suite 2202  
New Haven, CT 06510 | Tel: (203) 787-0646

**New York**

1385 Boston Post Road, 2nd floor  
Larchmont, NY 10538 | Tel: (914) 381-3140

Save the Sound © 2023 All rights reserved.

